

In the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A guide device for supporting a column having a ram inserted thereinto to allow relative axial movement between said column and said ram,

said ram having an outer ~~circumferential~~ surface of a polygonal-shaped cross section, said outer ~~circumferential~~ surface having a plurality of ram flat portions, each of said ram flat portions extending along an axial direction of said ram,

said column being disposed around said outer ~~circumferential~~ surface of said ram, said column having a through hole of a polygonal-shaped cross section including plural corner areas, said through hole being formed of a plurality of column flat portions meeting one another at said plural corner areas, each of said column flat portions corresponding to each of said ram flat portions, each of said column flat portions having a longitudinal groove formed therein, said longitudinal groove extending parallel to said axial direction and penetrating through said column in said axial direction,

a plurality of roller-shaped rolling elements being provided at each of said column flat portions of said through hole of said column and being received in said longitudinal grooves, said rolling elements rolling on the corresponding ram flat portion, a respective pair of said rolling elements being disposed at adjacent ones of said column flat portions adjacent to every one of said plural corner areas of said through hole of said column,

28           a plurality of supporting shafts being provided in  
29       said column, each of said supporting shafts extending  
30       ~~toward the~~ respectively in a direction parallel to a line  
31       perpendicular to said axial direction of said ram,  
32       ~~the extending direction of each of said ram flat portions,~~  
33       each of said supporting shafts respectively rotatably  
34       supporting each of said rolling elements. ~~rotatably.~~

Claim 2 (canceled).

1       3.   (currently amended) The guide device of claim 1, wherein  
2       each of said supporting shafts is supported on ~~both~~ two  
3       opposite end portions thereof inside said column.

Claim 4 (canceled).

1       5.   (withdrawn) The guide device of claim 1, wherein said ram  
2       has a central hole, said central hole having a first spiral  
3       groove formed on an inner circumferential surface thereof,  
4       a screw shaft having a second spiral groove formed on an  
5       outer circumferential surface thereof, said screw shaft  
6       being inserted into said central hole of said ram, a  
7       thin-walled, cylindrical retainer being interposed between  
8       said inner circumferential surface of said central hole of  
9       said ram and said outer circumferential surface of said  
10       screw shaft, said cylindrical retainer supporting a  
11       plurality of balls rotatably, said balls rolling on both

12           said first spiral groove of said ram and said second spiral  
13           groove of said screw shaft.

Claims 6 to 8 canceled.

1     **9.**   (currently amended) The guide device of claim 1, ~~[[47]]~~  
2           wherein said longitudinal groove has an oil retaining  
3           member inserted thereinto.

Claims 10 to 19 (canceled).

1     **20.** (new) The guide device of claim 1, wherein each of said  
2           corner areas is respectively a beveled corner area  
3           including a bevel surface between adjacent ones of said  
4           column flat portions.

1     **21.** (new) The guide device of claim 1, comprising at least  
2           three sets of said pairs of said rolling elements arranged  
3           regularly spaced from one another in said axial direction  
4           along said longitudinal grooves.

1     **22.** (new) An apparatus comprising:  
2           a column that extends axially in an axial direction  
3           and that has an internal through hole extending  
4           therethrough in said axial direction, wherein said through  
5           hole has a polygonal-shaped cross section bounded by plural  
6           flat inner walls of said column and plural inner corner

7 areas of said column respectively between adjacent ones of  
8 said flat inner walls;

9 a ram that extends axially in said axial direction and  
10 that is movably received in said through hole of said  
11 column so as to allow relative movement between said ram  
12 and said column in said axial direction, wherein said ram  
13 has an outer shape with a polygonal-shaped cross section  
14 bounded by plural flat outer walls of said ram and plural  
15 outer corner areas of said ram respectively between  
16 adjacent ones of said flat outer walls, and wherein said  
17 flat outer walls are respectively adjacent and parallel to  
18 said flat inner walls;

19 plural pairs of roller elements, wherein each one of  
20 said pairs respectively includes two of said roller  
21 elements that are rotatably mounted to said column and are  
22 arranged respectively on two adjacent ones of said flat  
23 inner walls adjacent to a respective one of said inner  
24 corner areas that is between said two roller elements of  
25 said pair, and wherein a respective one of said pairs of  
26 roller elements is provided at each one of said inner  
27 corner areas of said column such that said rollers contact  
28 and movably support said ram on all of said flat outer  
29 walls adjacent to each of said outer corner areas of said  
30 ram.

1 **23.** (new) The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said  
2 polygonal-shaped cross section of said through hole of said  
3 column corresponds in shape to said polygonal-shaped cross

4 section of said outer shape of said ram in that a total  
5 number of said flat inner walls corresponds to a total  
6 number of said flat outer walls, a total number of said  
7 inner corner areas corresponds to a total number of said  
8 outer corner areas, and external angles of said inner  
9 corner areas correspond to internal angles of said outer  
10 corner areas.

1 **24.** (new) The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said  
2 column has plural axial through grooves formed on said flat  
3 inner walls and extending entirely axially through said  
4 column in said axial direction, and wherein said roller  
5 elements are received in said axial through grooves.

1 **25.** (new) The apparatus according to claim 22, wherein  
2 respective rotation axes of said roller elements are all  
3 respectively fixed at non-adjustable positions relative to  
4 said column.

1 **26.** (new) The apparatus according to claim 22, comprising at  
2 least three sets of said pairs of said roller elements  
3 arranged regularly spaced from one another in said axial  
4 direction along said flat inner walls of said column.

**[RESPONSE CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE]**